

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NASA-04 NSC-10 RSC-01 SCI-06

FCC-03 OTPE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /112 W

----- 062392

R 071020Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 807

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 8306

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, BR

SUBJECT: TELECOMMUNICATIONS - RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ON
PROPOSED DOMESTIC SATELLITE SYSTEM

REF: RIO 3267 - A-160

1. GOB SOURCES OVER PAST YEAR HAD SEVERAL TIMES PREDICTED
EARLY APPROVAL DATES FOR SATELLITE SYSTEM. LATEST TIME FRAME
REPORTED REFTEL INDICATED MID-NOVEMBER GO-AHEAD DECISION.
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS SOURCES HAVE INFORMED EMBOFF THAT
MINISTRY HAD BEEN ASKED TO PREPARE DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSAL.
EXPECTATION IS THAT REPORT WILL BE COMPLETED EARLY DECEMBER.
ADDITIONAL DELAY INCREASES POSSIBILITY MENTIONED REFTEL
PARA 3 THAT PRESENT ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT MAKE DECISION.

2. ON LAST VISIT TO MINISTTY IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT
QUESTION AS TO TIMING FOR APPROVAL OF SATELLITE PROJECT,
OFFICIAL STATED THAT HIS PERSONAL OPINION IS THAT UPON
COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF PROJECT STUDY, PRESIDENT MEDICI
WILL STILL APPROVE PROJECT. OFFICIAL, HOWEVER, DID NOT SEEM
AS OPTIMISTIC AND ASSURED OF APPROVAL AS HE WAS SEVERAL MONTHS
AGO.

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3. NOVEMBER 1ST PRESS ARTICLE INDICATED THAT PRESIDENT-
DESIGNATE GEISEL SUPPORTS SATELLITE SYSTEM. MINISTRY OFFICIAL
STATED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE THE RESULTS
OF LEAKS AND MINISTRY CANNOT OFFICIALLY CONFIRM SUCH A STATEMENT.
SOURCE ALSO STATED THAT MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED
NOT TO SPEAK ON THIS SUBJECT. PRESS LEAKS PROBABLY ENGINEERED
BY SATELLITE PROPONENTS. SEVERAL OFFICIAL IN MINISTRY AND
TELEBRAS STILL STRONG SUPPORTERS OF SATELLITE PROJECT.
OPPONENTS ARE CONCENTRATED IN EMBRATEL WHICH HAS VESTED
INTEREST IN GROUND MICROWAVE SYSTEM.

4. CONGEN RIO ALSO REPORTS CAUTION BY SATELLITE
PROPONENTS WHO FOR THE FIRST TIME HAVE INDICATED THAT FATE
OF ENTIRE PROJECT MAY NOW BE IN QUESTION. CONGEN REPORTS THAT
DUE TO DELAY IN GO-AHEAD DECISION FOR SATELLITE, EMBRATEL HAS
BEGUN EXPANSION OF BRAZILIAN MICROWAVE SYSTEM. THIS EXPANSION
WILL REDUCE COMMERCIAL NEED FOR SATELLITE AS TELECOMMUNICATIONS
TOOL. SOURCES THEREFORE FEEL THAT DELAYS IN FAVORABLE DECISION
ON SATELLITE WEAKEN CASE FOR OPERATIONAL USE AND MAKE
NECESSARY STRONGER DEFENSE ON NATIONAL SECURITY GROUNDS.
DAO SOURCES INDICATE THAT MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS NOT
PREPARED AT THIS TIME TO PRESS FOR APPROVAL OF PROJECT.
ACCORDINGLY, DECISION ON THE SATELLITE PROJECT MAY BE DELAYED
UNTIL THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION.
CRIMMINS

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